TOMB OF DRACULA ™

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THE TOMB OF DRACULA™

LORD OF VAMPIRES!

DRACULA HAS LOST..

--AND JANUS STANDS... TRIUMPHANT!

COMICDOM'S NUMBER 1 FEAR MAGAZINE

Five hundred years ago he was killed...but he *did not die.* Today, *Quincy Harker, Frank Drake, Rachel Van Helsing,* and *Blade,* the Vampire Slayer—stalk him...as this unliving Lord of Vampires spreads his reign of terror across a twentieth century world.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: TOMB OF DRACULA™

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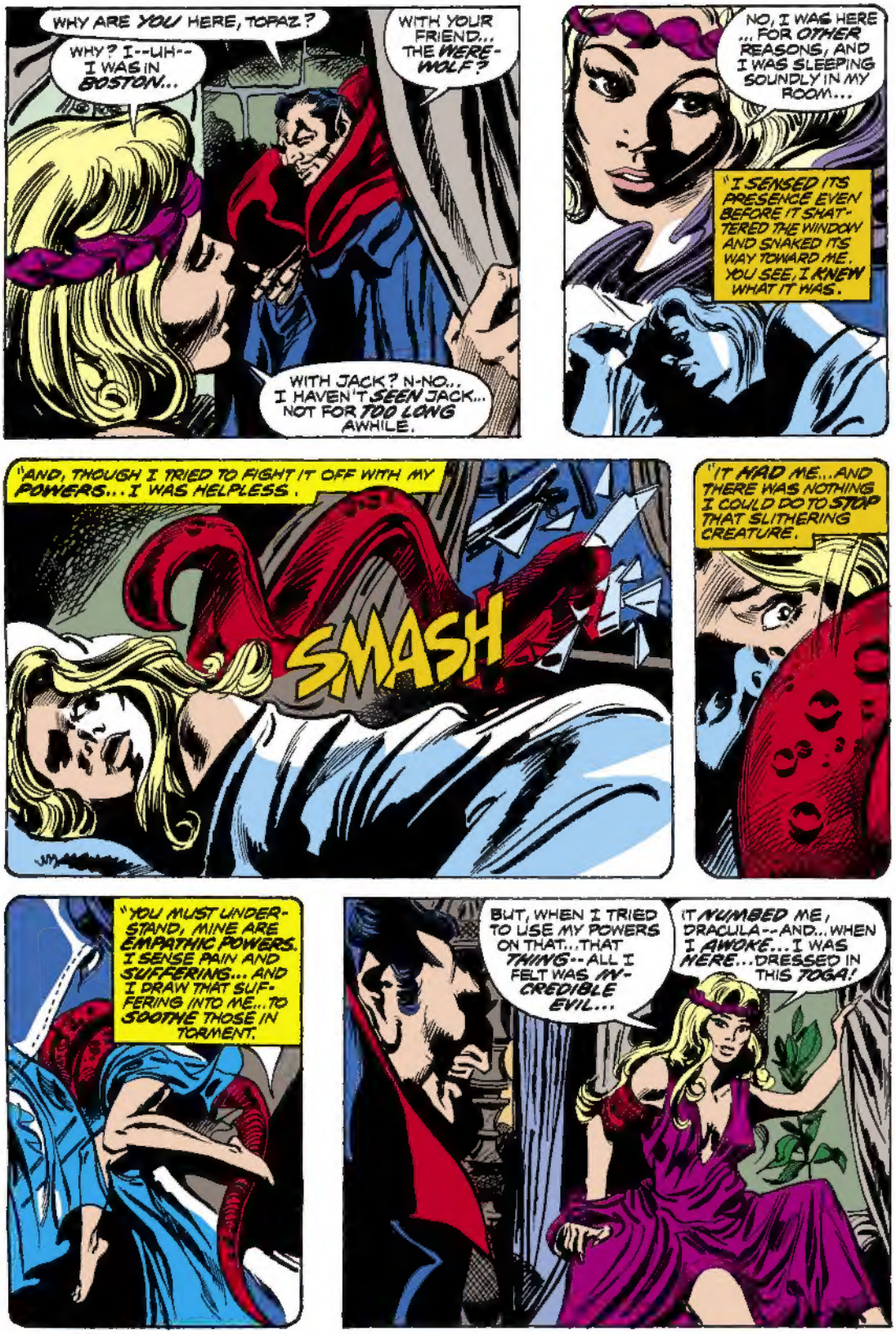
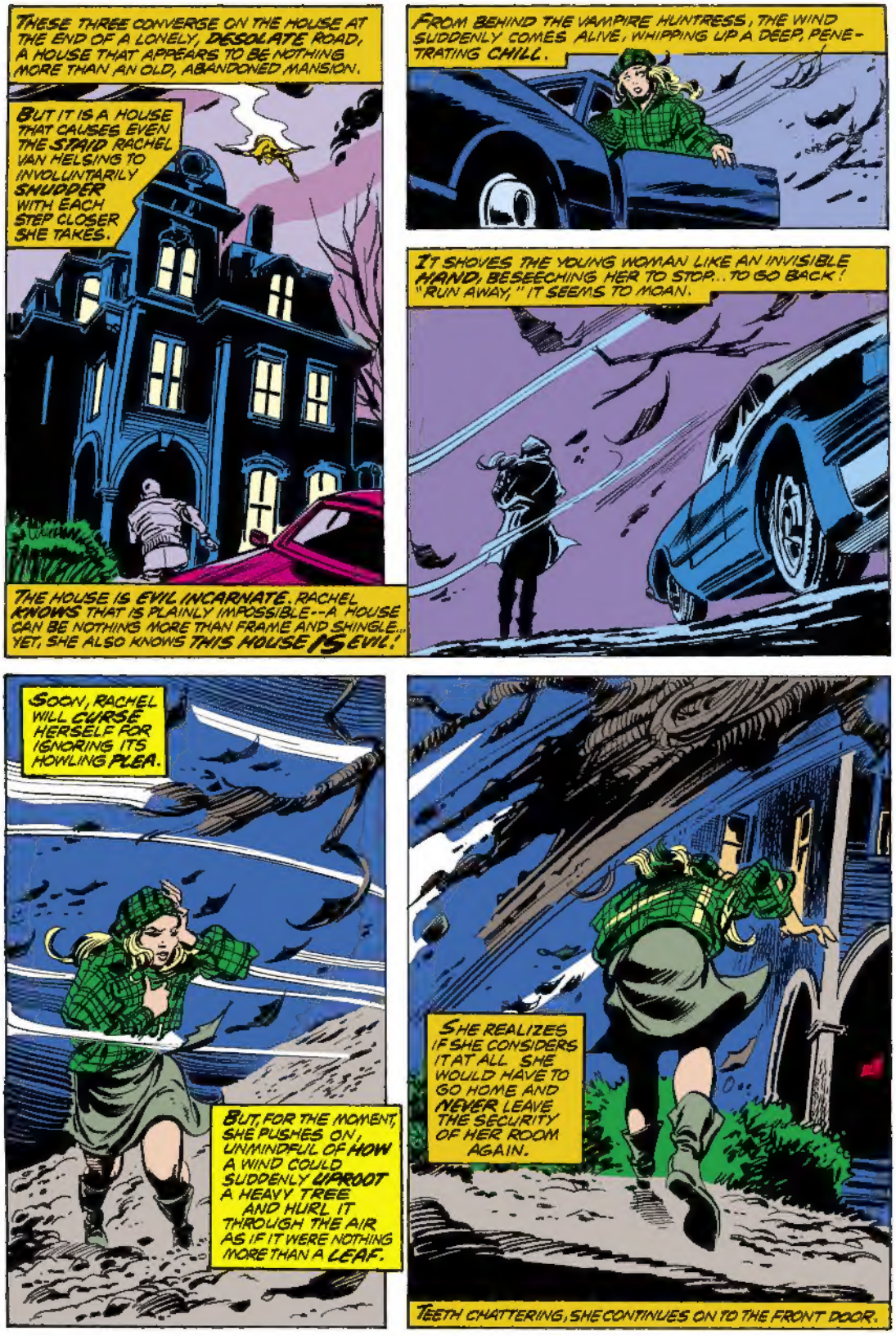
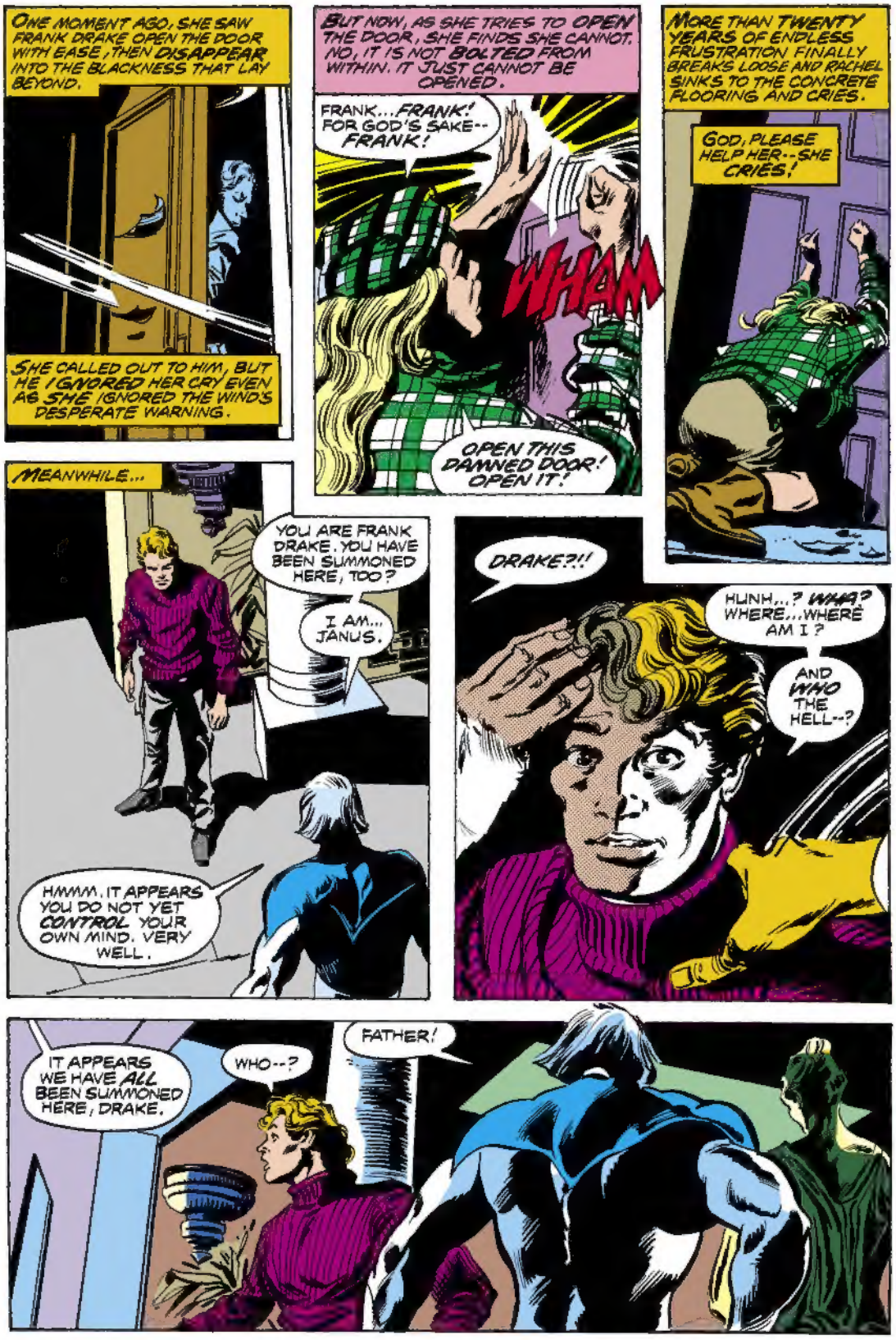
THE ROAD TO HELL!

"THE PLAYERS ARE ALL ARRIVING, MASTER. WHEN DO THE GAMES BEGIN?" THE QUESTION ELICITS NO ANSWER. THE MASTER IS GRIM AND AWAITS HIS PRIZE.
DO YOU SMELL IT, TOPAZ? EVIL PERMEATES THIS HOUSE.
NEVER BEFORE HAVE I FELT SUCH A PRESENCE!
IT STIFLES EVEN ME!


WHY ARE YOU HERE, TOPAZ?
WHY? I--UH-- I WAS IN BOSTON...
WITH YOUR FRIEND... THE WERE-WOLF?
WITH JACK? N-NO... I HAVEN'T SEEN JACK... NOT FOR TOO LONG AWHILE.
NO, I WAS HERE ... FOR OTHER REASONS, AND I WAS SLEEPING SOUNDLY IN MY ROOM...
"I SENSED ITS PRESENCE EVEN BEFORE IT SHATTERED THE WINDOW AND SNAKED ITS WAY TOWARD ME. YOU SEE, I KNEW WHAT IT WAS.
"AND, THOUGH I TRIED TO FIGHT IT OFF WITH MY POWERS... I WAS HELPLESS.
SMASH
"IT HAD ME... AND THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO TO STOP THAT SLITHERING CREATURE.
"YOU MUST UNDERSTAND, MINE ARE EMPATHIC POWERS. I SENSE PAIN AND SUFFERING... AND I DRAW THAT SUFFERING INTO ME... TO SOOTHE THOSE IN TORMENT.
BUT, WHEN I TRIED TO USE MY POWERS ON THAT... THAT THING -- ALL I FELT WAS INCREDIBLE EVIL...
IT NUMBED ME, DRACULA -- AND... WHEN I AWOKE... I WAS HERE... DRESSED IN THIS TOGA!

WHERE EXACTLY IS HERE?
WE STAND AT THE DOORWAY TO HELL!
"FRANK DRAKE COMES, MASTER. HE IS STILL IN YOUR GREAT AND MAGNIFICENT POWER."
HE IS A DECENDANT OF DRACULA, FIVE HUNDRED YEARS REMOVED.
HIS FATHER WAS A MILLIONAIRE, A RESPECTED MEMBER OF SOCIETY. FRANK DRAKE WAS A WORTHLESS PLAYBOY WHO SQUANDERED AWAY HIS FAMILY FORTUNE.
BUT THAT WAS BEFORE HE MET WITH RACHEL VAN HELSING...
...A LONELY WOMAN WHO WATCHED HER FAMILY SLAIN BY DRACULA...A WOMAN OBSESSED WITH KILLING THE LORD OF VAMPIRES.
ONCE, YEARS BEFORE, SHE SAVED FRANK DRAKE FROM COMMITTING SUICIDE. NOW SHE RACES TO SAVE HIM FROM ANOTHER FATE...WHATEVER IT MAY BE.
BUT, A SHADOW CROSSES THE ROAD, DISTRACTING HER GAZE FOR A MOMENT. SKYWARD, SHE SEES A GOLDEN EAGLE...
...ONE WHICH TRANSFORMS ITSELF INTO A MAN...INTO JANUS, SON OF DRACULA. JANUS--CHILD OF HEAVEN, OF EARTH...AND OF HELL!
ME, TOO, HAS A MISSION... ONE HE WAS BORN TO FULLFILL...
CRA
RRA
KK
AND THAT MISSION IS-- TO SLAY HIS FATHER-- DRACULA!

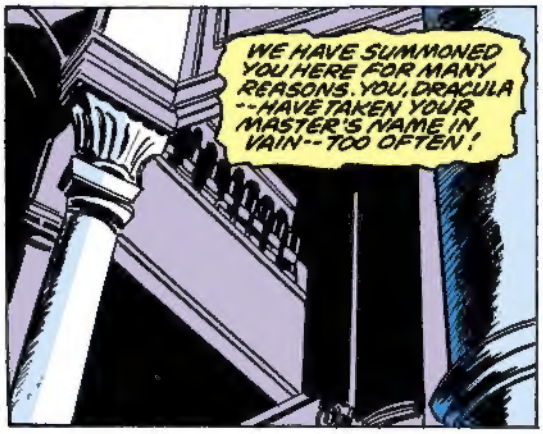

THESE THREE CONVERGE ON THE HOUSE AT THE END OF A LONELY, DESOLATE ROAD, A HOUSE THAT APPEARS TO BE NOTHING MORE THAN AN OLD, ABANDONED MANSION.
BUT IT IS A HOUSE THAT CAUSES EVEN THE STAID RACHEL VAN HELSING TO INVOLUNTARILY SHUDDER WITH EACH STEP CLOSER SHE TAKES.
THE HOUSE IS EVIL INCARNATE. RACHEL KNOWS THAT IS PLAINLY IMPOSSIBLE--A HOUSE CAN BE NOTHING MORE THAN FRAME AND SHINGLE... YET, SHE ALSO KNOWS THIS HOUSE IS EVIL!
FROM BEHIND THE VAMPIRE HUNTRESS, THE WIND SUDDENLY COMES ALIVE, WHIPPING UP A DEEP, PENE-TRATING CHILL.
IT SHOVES THE YOUNG WOMAN LIKE AN INVISIBLE HAND, BESEECHING HER TO STOP... TO GO BACK! "RUN AWAY," IT SEEMS TO MOAN.
SOON, RACHEL WILL CURSE HERSELF FOR IGNORING ITS HOWLING PLEA.
BUT, FOR THE MOMENT, SHE PUSHES ON, UNMINDFUL OF HOW A WIND COULD SUDDENLY UPROOT A HEAVY TREE AND HURL IT THROUGH THE AIR AS IF IT WERE NOTHING MORE THAN A LEAF.
SHE REALIZES IF SHE CONSIDERS IT AT ALL SHE WOULD HAVE TO GO HOME AND NEVER LEAVE THE SECURITY OF HER ROOM AGAIN.
TEETH CHATTERING, SHE CONTINUES ON TO THE FRONT DOOR.


ONE MOMENT AGO, SHE SAW FRANK DRAKE OPEN THE DOOR WITH EASE, THEN DISAPPEAR INTO THE BLACKNESS THAT LAY BEYOND.
SHE CALLED OUT TO HIM, BUT HE IGNORED HER CRY EVEN AS SHE IGNORED THE WIND'S DESPERATE WARNING.
BUT NOW, AS SHE TRIES TO OPEN THE DOOR, SHE FINDS SHE CANNOT. NO, IT IS NOT BOLTED FROM WITHIN. IT JUST CANNOT BE OPENED.
FRANK...FRANK! FOR GOD'S SAKE-- FRANK!
WHAM
OPEN THIS DAMNED DOOR! OPEN IT!
MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS OF ENDLESS FRUSTRATION FINALLY BREAKS LOOSE AND RACHEL SINKS TO THE CONCRETE FLOORING AND CRIES.
GOD, PLEASE HELP HER--SHE CRIES!
MEANWHILE...
YOU ARE FRANK DRAKE. YOU HAVE BEEN SUMMONED HERE, TOO?
I AM... JANUS.
HMMM. IT APPEARS YOU DO NOT YET CONTROL YOUR OWN MIND. VERY WELL.
DRAKE?!!
HUNH...? WHA? WHERE...WHERE AM I?
AND WHO THE HELL--?
IT APPEARS WE HAVE ALL BEEN SUMMONED HERE, DRAKE.
WHO--?
FATHER!

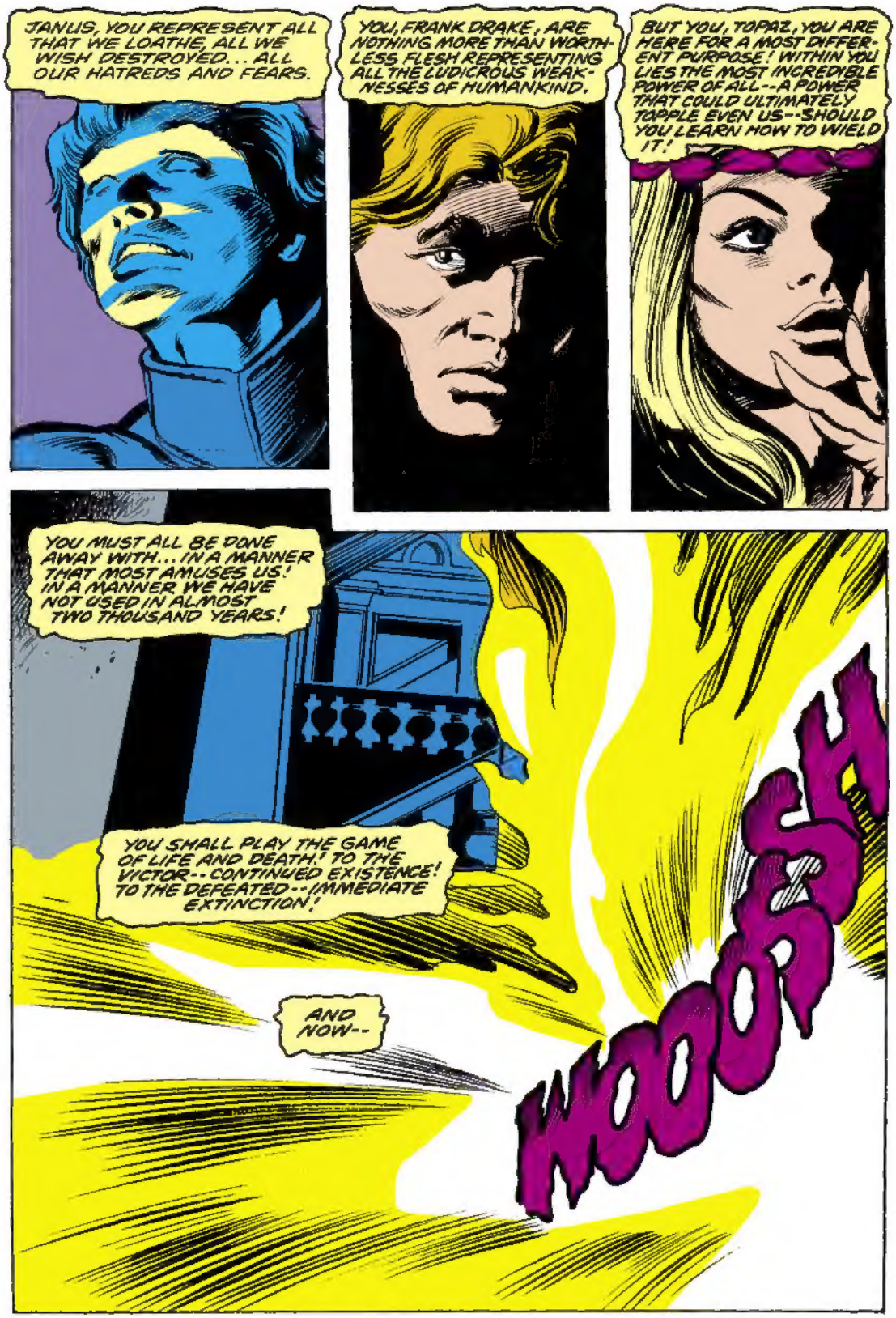
SO YOU'VE FALLEN VICTIM TO THIS HOUSE AS WELL, FATHER?
I AM NO VICTIM, JANUS. I CAME HERE OF MY OWN WILL.
SO THEY WOULD HAVE YOU BELIEVE. BUT, YOU WERE BROUGHT HERE--EVEN AS IF YOU HAD BEEN BOUND AND GAGGED AND DRAGGED ACROSS THE ROCK AND GRAVEL AND TOSSED IN HERE AGAINST YOUR OWN WILL.
AND SURELY YOU KNOW WHO IS BEHIND THIS, FATHER.

OR, DO YOU SERVE MORE THAN ONE MASTER?

BUT SHE SERVES OUR WILL, AND THEREFORE HER PRESENCE IS NOT REQUIRED.
SILENCE, HEAVEN-SPAWN! THE FAMILY DRACULA IS PRESENT... ALL SAVE ONE.
MY HALF-SISTER--LILITH!
WE SAID--SILENCE! WE WILL NOT REPEAT OURSELVES AGAIN!


WE HAVE SUMMONED YOU HERE FOR MANY REASONS. YOU, DRACULA --HAVE TAKEN YOUR MASTER'S NAME IN VAIN--TOO OFTEN!

YOUR EXISTENCE IS NO LONGER TO BE TOLERATED! WE WOULD BENEFIT BY YOUR TOTAL HUMILIATION AND YOUR FINAL DEATH!


JANUS, YOU REPRESENT ALL THAT WE LOATHE, ALL WE WISH DESTROYED... ALL OUR HATREDS AND FEARS.
YOU, FRANK DRAKE, ARE NOTHING MORE THAN WORTHLESS FLESH REPRESENTING ALL THE LUDICROUS WEAKNESSES OF HUMANKIND.
BUT YOU, TOPAZ, YOU ARE HERE FOR A MOST DIFFERENT PURPOSE! WITHIN YOU LIES THE MOST INCREDIBLE POWER OF ALL--A POWER THAT COULD ULTIMATELY TOPPLE EVEN US--SHOULD YOU LEARN HOW TO WIELD IT!
YOU MUST ALL BE DONE AWAY WITH... IN A MANNER THAT MOST AMUSES US! IN A MANNER WE HAVE NOT USED IN ALMOST TWO THOUSAND YEARS!
YOU SHALL PLAY THE GAME OF LIFE AND DEATH! TO THE VICTOR--CONTINUED EXISTENCE! TO THE DEFEATED--IMMEDIATE EXTINCTION!
AND NOW--
WOOOSH

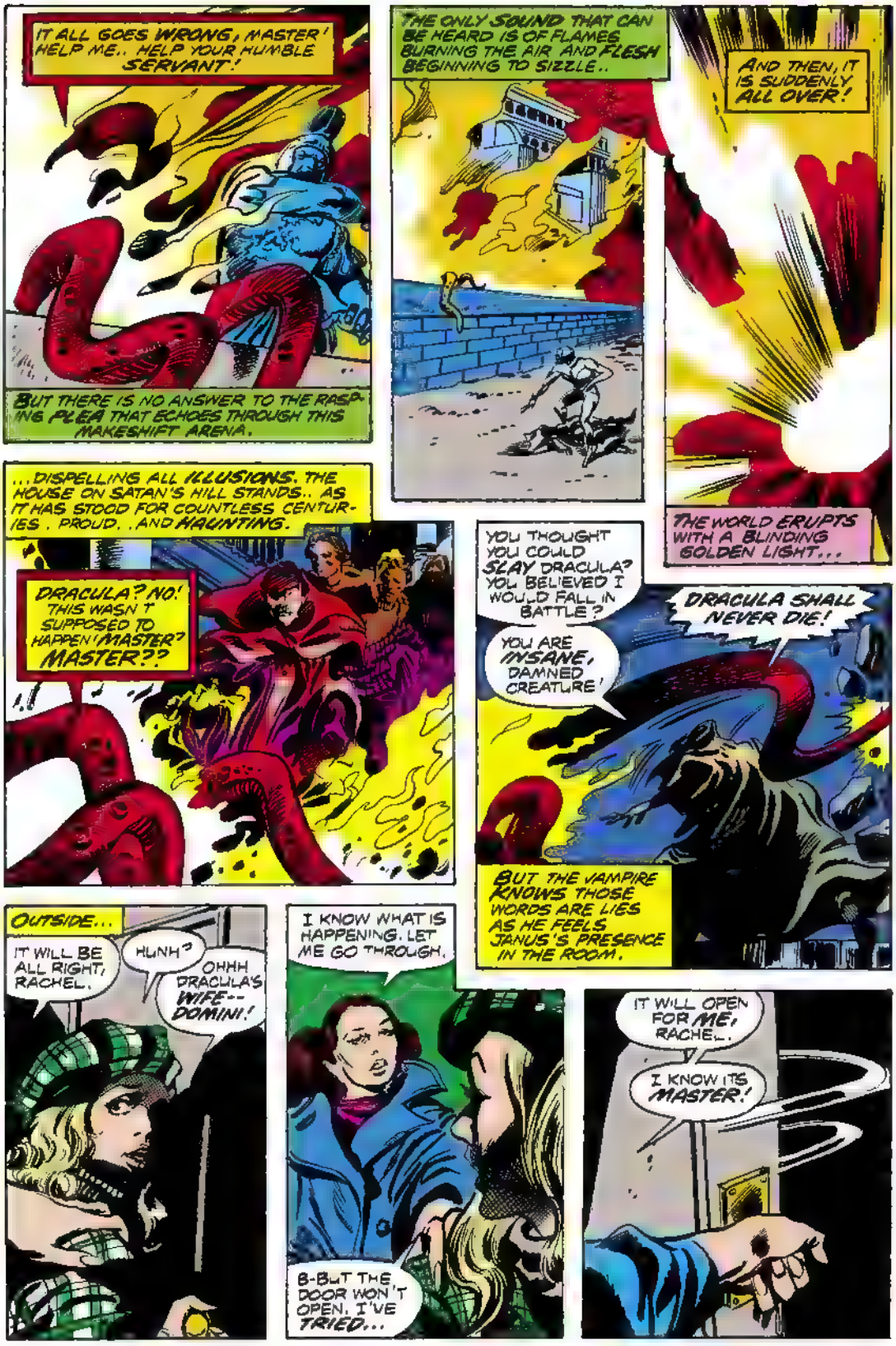
THE MUSTY AIR SHIMMERS WITH A GOLDEN RADIANCE AS CONCRETE WALLS FADE FROM VIEW AND ARE REPLACED WITH A MAJESTIC STADIUM BOOMING WITH THE SHOUTS OF A WILD, ROARING CROWD!
ROMAN CENTURIONS CHEER, ANXIOUS FOR THE SPECTACLE THEY ARE SURE TO WITNESS. THEIR CRIES ARE LED BY A STRANGELY GLOWING BLOOD-RED... THING... A CREATURE THAT MOST ASSUREDLY COULD ONLY HAVE BEEN BORN IN HELL!
THE TIME HAS COME FOR BATTLE. FATHER SHALL FIGHT SON, AND ONLY ONE SHALL SURVIVE!
NO! JANUS WILL NOT SUBMIT TO YOUR DEMANDS!
DRACULA, I SENSE A DARK PRESENCE HERE... THE ULTIMATE EVIL OBSERVES US!
HOLY COW-- WHERE ARE WE? HOW DID WE GET HERE?!?

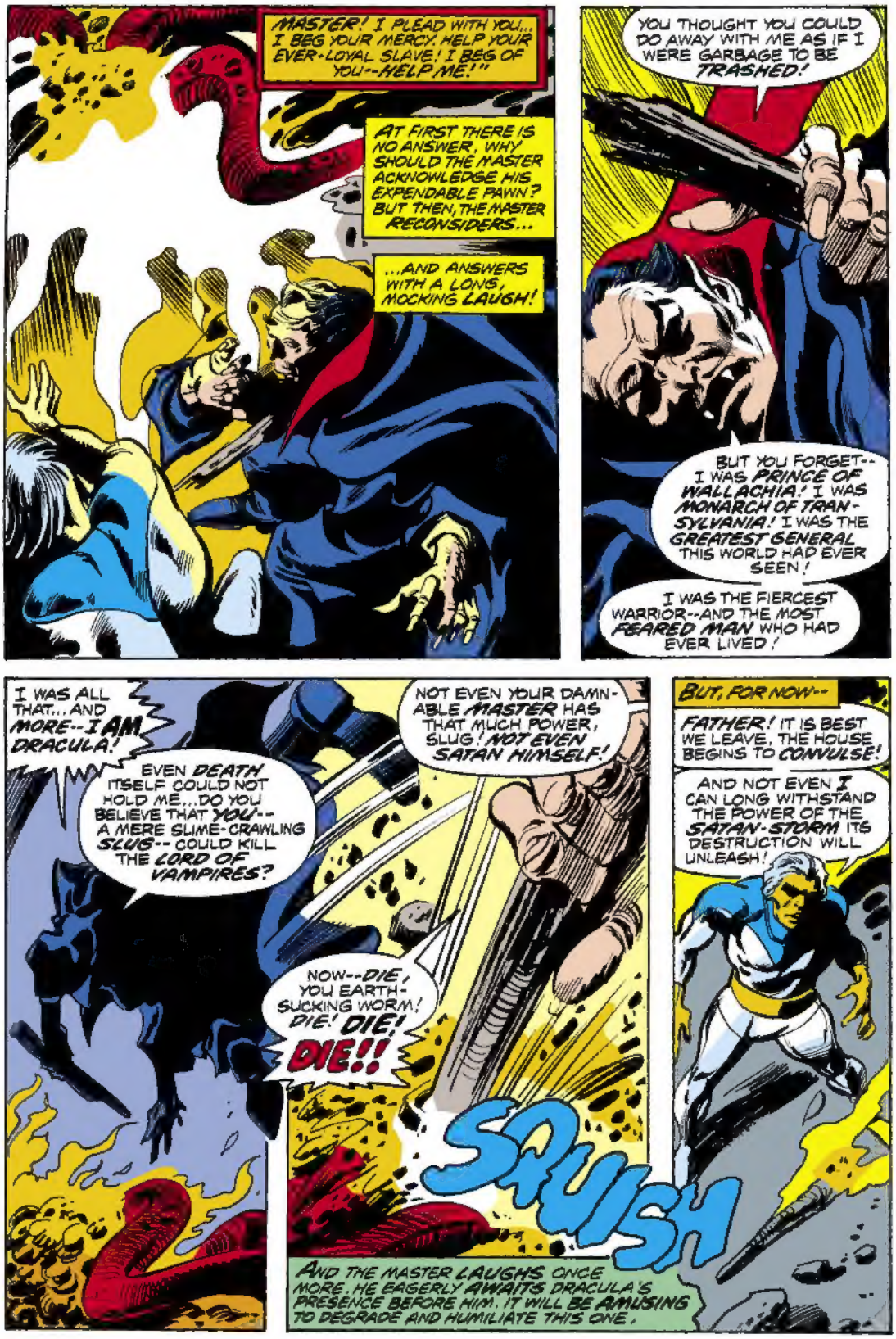
YOU WILL BATTLE YOUR FATHER, HEAVEN-SPAWN. MY MASTER HAS DECREED A BATTLE MUST TAKE PLACE. THEREFORE-- IT SHALL TAKE PLACE.
OR THE GIRL CALLED TOPAZ WILL DIE! YOU WIN, SHE LIVES. YOU DIE--SHE DIES WITH YOU!
WHAT ABOUT ME? I--I DON'T BELONG HERE! LET ME OUT! LET ME OUT!
FOR GOD'S SAKE-- LET ME OUT!
FRANK DRAKE INVOKES THE WRONG DIETY HERE.
FATHER, THIS IS NOT THE TIME FOR US TO BATTLE.
I UNDERSTAND, JANUS. BEFORE THAT TIME COMES--
--WE SHALL DESTROY THAT CREATURE-- TOGETHER!
NOW, FATHER-- NOW!

ARGHHH! JANUS! THE BEAST ENTRAPS ME!
I CANNOT FREE MYSELF.. CANNOT ALTER MY FORM!
JANUS!!
FATHER--I CANNOT HELP, NOT WHILE I STRUGGLE FOR MY OWN FREEDOM!
THE CREATURE CASUALLY DISMISSES DRACULA AND JANUS, TOSSING THEM LIKE DISH RAGS INTO THE CIRCULAR STADIUM...
AND AS FATHER AND SON MAKE A VAIN ATTEMPT TOWARD FREEDOM...
RINGS OF FIRE! THE DEVIL-SPAWN MEANS TO HOLD US HERE.
AND...I CANNOT MUSTER THE STRENGTH TO FORCE MY WAY THROUGH.
ITS MASTER MUST BE CLOSE... HIS EVIL IS WEAKENING ME!
AND I AM STILL HELPLESS TO CHANGE MY FORM!
WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE, JANUS? TELL ME!
I THINK IT IS OBVIOUS, FATHER.
SATAN HIMSELF HOLDS US HIS CAPTIVE!
I DON'T GET IT--WE'RE TRAPPED IN SOME KINDA WALL OF FIRE!
HOW IN BLAZES DO WE GET OUTTA HERE?
FRANK, I DON'T KNOW.. I DON'T KNOW!

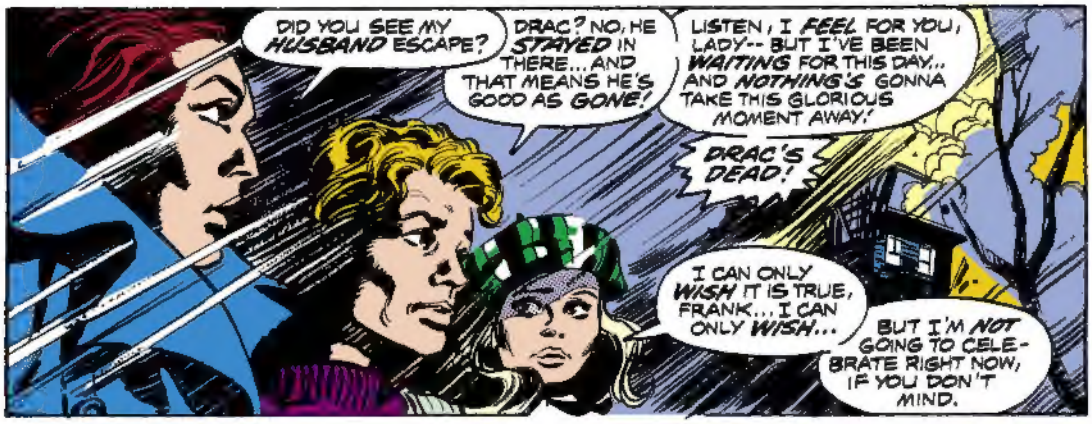
M-MY POWERS ARE NOT WHAT THEY ONCE WERE. I COULD HAVE HELPED US ESCAPE. BUT NOW--NOW I'M HELPLESS.
WHAT HAPPENED, TOPAZ? WHEN I MET YOU IN TRANSYLVANIA--*
* TOD #18 --MARV W.
I WAS A DIFFERENT PERSON THEN. I CANNOT TELL YOU WHAT HAS HAPPENED SINCE IT'S ALL BEEN TOO MUCH FOR ME...
BUT THAT DOESN'T MATTER NOW-- NOTHING MATTERS.
..NOW THAT JACK RUSSELL* AND I HAVE-- NO! I CANNOT EVEN THINK ABOUT IT!
* JACK RUSSELL--A.K.A WEREWOLF (BY NIGHT!) --MARV
FATHER--WE ARE FORCED TO DO BATTLE!
IT SEEMS I MUST KILL YOU NOW... LONG BEFORE DESTINY DEMANDS YOUR DESTRUCTION.
WHAT?
YOU ATTACK YOUR FATHER?
YOU SEEK TO KILL THE MAN WHO GAVE YOU LIFE?
NEVER, JANUS! DRACULA WILL NOT PERMIT SUCH AN OUTRAGE!

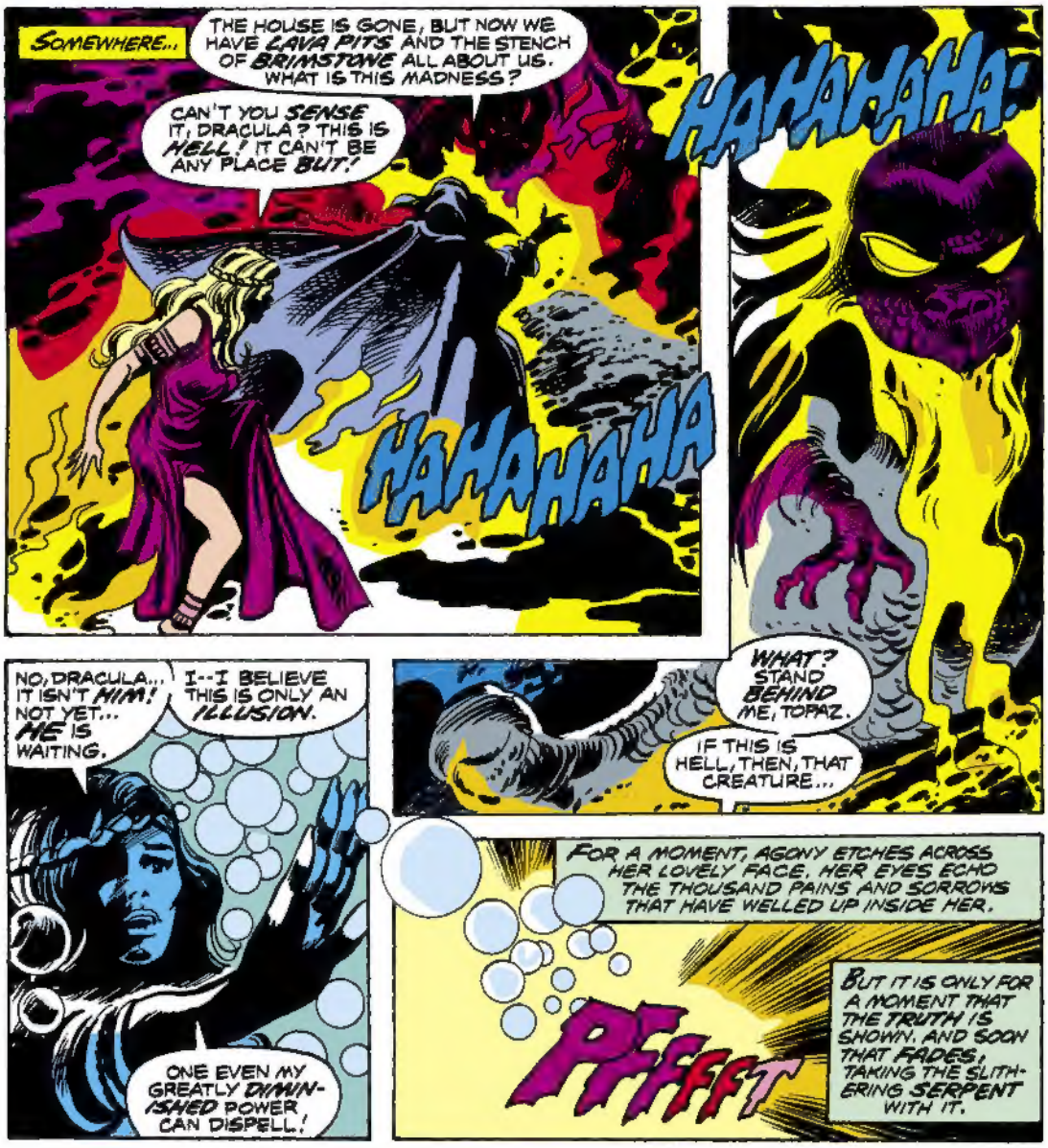
NO--DRACULA DEMANDS YOUR DEATH, INSTEAD!
IT PAINS ME, FATHER--TO SEE YOU SUFFER!
SURRENDER.. AND YOUR DEATH SHALL BE SWIFT... MERCIFUL!
ARRGGHHH!
I KNOW IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR YOU TO BELIEVE THIS--
--BUT, EVEN AS I DESTROY THE EVIL YOU REPRESENT..
...I STILL LOVE YOU AS A SON LOVES HIS FATHER!
ARGHHHHHH!
IT IS OVER--DRACULA IS DEAD!
JANUS STANDS TRIUMPHANT!
BUT--DRACULA WAS SUPPOSED TO DEFEAT YOU! DRACULA WAS SUPPOSED TO LIVE!
JANUS WAS TO DIE!
MASTER--WHAT HAS GONE WRONG? MASTER?!!
NO, SATAN-SPAWN, YOU'LL NOT COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR DAMNED MASTER ANY LONGER!
MASTER??

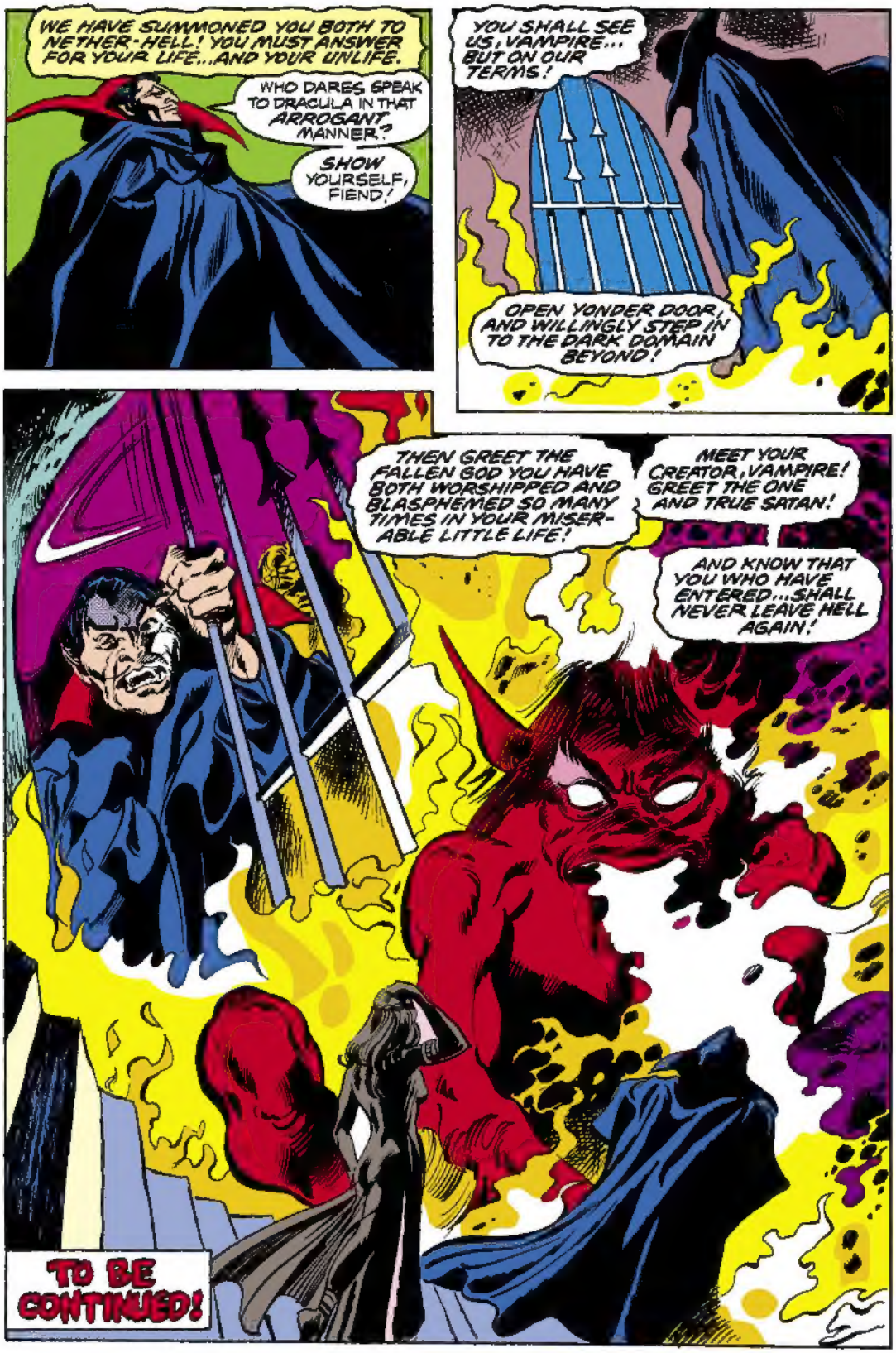

IT ALL GOES WRONG, MASTER! HELP ME.. HELP YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT!
BUT THERE IS NO ANSWER TO THE RASPING PLEA THAT ECHOES THROUGH THIS MAKESHIFT ARENA.
THE ONLY SOUND THAT CAN BE HEARD IS OF FLAMES BURNING THE AIR AND FLESH BEGINNING TO SIZZLE..
AND THEN, IT IS SUDDENLY ALL OVER!
THE WORLD ERUPTS WITH A BLINDING GOLDEN LIGHT...
...DISPELLING ALL ILLUSIONS. THE HOUSE ON SATAN'S HILL STANDS.. AS IT HAS STOOD FOR COUNTLESS CENTURIES . PROUD. .AND HAUNTING.
DRACULA? NO! THIS WASN'T SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN! MASTER? MASTER??
YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD SLAY DRACULA? YOU BELIEVED I WOULD FALL IN BATTLE?
YOU ARE INSANE, DAMNED CREATURE!
DRACULA SHALL NEVER DIE!
BUT THE VAMPIRE KNOWS THOSE WORDS ARE LIES AS HE FEELS JANUS'S PRESENCE IN THE ROOM.
OUTSIDE...
IT WILL BE ALL RIGHT, RACHEL.
HUNH?
OHHH DRACULA'S WIFE-- DOMINI!
I KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING. LET ME GO THROUGH.
B-BUT THE DOOR WON'T OPEN. I'VE TRIED...
IT WILL OPEN FOR ME, RACHEL..
I KNOW ITS MASTER!


MASTER! I PLEAD WITH YOU... I BEG YOUR MERCY. HELP YOUR EVER-LOYAL SLAVE! I BEG OF YOU--HELP ME!"
AT FIRST THERE IS NO ANSWER. WHY SHOULD THE MASTER ACKNOWLEDGE HIS EXPENDABLE PAWN? BUT THEN, THE MASTER RECONSIDERS...
...AND ANSWERS WITH A LONG, MOCKING LAUGH!
YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD DO AWAY WITH ME AS IF I WERE GARBAGE TO BE TRASHED!
BUT YOU FORGET-- I WAS PRINCE OF WALLACHIA! I WAS MONARCH OF TRANSYLVANIA! I WAS THE GREATEST GENERAL THIS WORLD HAD EVER SEEN!
I WAS THE FIERCEST WARRIOR--AND THE MOST FEARED MAN WHO HAD EVER LIVED!
I WAS ALL THAT... AND MORE--I AM DRACULA!
EVEN DEATH ITSELF COULD NOT HOLD ME...DO YOU BELIEVE THAT YOU-- A MERE SLIME-CRAWLING SLUG-- COULD KILL THE LORD OF VAMPIRES?
NOT EVEN YOUR DAMNABLE MASTER HAS THAT MUCH POWER, SLUG! NOT EVEN SATAN HIMSELF!
NOW--DIE, YOU EARTH-SUCKING WORM! DIE! DIE! DIE!!
SQUISH
AND THE MASTER LAUGHS ONCE MORE. HE EAGERLY AWAITS DRACULA'S PRESENCE BEFORE HIM. IT WILL BE AMUSING TO DEGRADE AND HUMILIATE THIS ONE.
BUT, FOR NOW--
FATHER! IT IS BEST WE LEAVE. THE HOUSE BEGINS TO CONVULSE!
AND NOT EVEN I CAN LONG WITHSTAND THE POWER OF THE SATAN-STORM ITS DESTRUCTION WILL UNLEASH!

THE HOUSE SUDDENLY SCREAMS FOR ITS LIFE... ITS FRAME AND RAFTERS SHOUT TO ALL THE WORLD OF ITS TERRIFYING AGONY!
THERE-- LOOK!
FRANK!
RACHEL? C'MON-- MOVE!
WE GOTTA GET OUTTA HERE... IT'S GONNA BLOW ANY MINUTE!
THEY RUN THROUGH THE FIRE THAT ALMOST SEEMS TO PART FOR THEM. JUST BARELY IN TIME DO THEY MAKE IT CLEAR OF THE HOUSE BEFORE THE FLAMES TOTALLY ENGULF IT.
HEY! WHAT HAPPENED TO TOPAZ? SHE WAS RIGHT BEHIND ME!
I--I DON'T KNOW. I SAW A GIRL HEAD BACK... INTO THE BLAZE.
TOPAZ? WHY DID YOU RETURN?
I--I DO NOT KNOW. I FELT COMPELLED TO. I COULDN'T RUN... I JUST COULDN'T!
OUTSIDE, THE SKIES SUDDENLY SHATTER, UNLEASHING A VERITABLE DELUGE...
AND THE ANCIENT MANOR CREAKS IN SATISFACTION...
CRRAACK
...AS THE RAIN SNUFFS OUT THE FLAMES...
...WHILE A GREAT GOLDEN EAGLE SWINGS ITS WAY THROUGH THE SMOKE. JANUS LIVES, WONDERING HOW DRACULA SURVIVED HIS DEADLY ASSAULT.
BUT THE ANSWER IS CLEAR-- THE VAMPIRE'S LIFE WAS SPARED... BY THE MANSION'S MASTER. BUT FOR WHAT PURPOSE... FOR WHAT SINISTER MOTIVE?
THAT, EVEN THE HEAVEN-BORN JANUS, CANNOT KNOW.


DID YOU SEE MY HUSBAND ESCAPE?
DRAC? NO, HE STAYED IN THERE... AND THAT MEANS HE'S GOOD AS GONE!
LISTEN, I FEEL FOR YOU, LADY-- BUT I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS DAY... AND NOTHING'S GONNA TAKE THIS GLORIOUS MOMENT AWAY!
DRAC'S DEAD!
I CAN ONLY WISH IT IS TRUE, FRANK... I CAN ONLY WISH...
BUT I'M NOT GOING TO CELEBRATE RIGHT NOW, IF YOU DON'T MIND.


SOMEWHERE...
THE HOUSE IS GONE, BUT NOW WE HAVE LAVA PITS AND THE STENCH OF BRIMSTONE ALL ABOUT US. WHAT IS THIS MADNESS?
CAN'T YOU SENSE IT, DRACULA? THIS IS HELL! IT CAN'T BE ANY PLACE BUT!
HAHAHAHA
HAHAHAHA!
NO, DRACULA... IT ISN'T HIM! NOT YET... HE IS WAITING.
I--I BELIEVE THIS IS ONLY AN ILLUSION.
ONE EVEN MY GREATLY DIMINISHED POWER CAN DISPELL!
WHAT? STAND BEHIND ME, TOPAZ.
IF THIS IS HELL, THEN, THAT CREATURE...
FOR A MOMENT, AGONY ETCHES ACROSS HER LOVELY FACE. HER EYES ECHO THE THOUSAND PAINS AND SORROWS THAT HAVE WELLED UP INSIDE HER.
PFFFT
BUT IT IS ONLY FOR A MOMENT THAT THE TRUTH IS SHOWN. AND SOON THAT FADES, TAKING THE SLITHERING SERPENT WITH IT.


WE HAVE SUMMONED YOU BOTH TO NETHER-HELL! YOU MUST ANSWER FOR YOUR LIFE...AND YOUR UNLIFE.
WHO DARES SPEAK TO DRACULA IN THAT ARROGANT MANNER?
SHOW YOURSELF, FIEND!
YOU SHALL SEE US, VAMPIRE... BUT ON OUR TERMS!
OPEN YONDER DOOR, AND WILLINGLY STEP IN TO THE DARK DOMAIN BEYOND!
THEN GREET THE FALLEN GOD YOU HAVE BOTH WORSHIPPED AND BLASPHEMED SO MANY TIMES IN YOUR MISERABLE LITTLE LIFE!
MEET YOUR CREATOR, VAMPIRE! GREET THE ONE AND TRUE SATAN!
AND KNOW THAT YOU WHO HAVE ENTERED...SHALL NEVER LEAVE HELL AGAIN!
TO BE CONTINUED!